

Human Research Ethics Board (HREB)

Changes to Course-Based and Student-Led Project Ethics Approval

Dr. Cynthia Gallop (HREB Chair)

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MRU's Commitment to Undergraduate Research

- Has led to a number of courses and/or projects created that encourage some form of inquiry-based learning and dissemination
- Unfortunately, much of the undergraduate “research” being conducted is not compliant with Tri-Council Policy
 - A fair bit of research being conducted and disseminated by students is not being reviewed or managed well...or at all.
 - Poses a threat to institutional reputation
 - Poses a threat to the safety of students on campus
 - Both as researchers and participants

Current Student-Led and Course-Based Research Non Compliance



- * The current lack of communication and oversight poses a risk to students, faculty, and community members

Human Research Ethics Board

- Authority

- HREB Receives its authority from:

1. Canada's Tri-Council Agencies
2. MRU Board of Governors

- Academic policy statement 585-1

- Mandate

- Tri-Council requires (as a condition of funding):

- Researchers and their institutions apply the ethical principles and the articles of Tri-Council policy and be guided by the application sections of the articles
 - As such, all research activities , as defined by Tri-Council, involving human participants,
 - Either originating at MRU, and/or
 - Taking place at MRU
 - Must be reviewed and approved prior to beginning project



Types of Inquiry

as defined by Tri-Council

- **Formal Research**
 - “An undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry and/or systematic investigation” (TCPS2 Article 2.1, para 3)
 - Includes research conducted by faculty members and students conducting honours theses or equivalent research projects involving human participants (TCPS2 Article 6.12, para 8)
- **Student-Led and Course-Based Research**
 - “...Research activities intended solely for pedagogical purposes...” (TCPS2 Article 6.12, para 8)
 - Such pedagogical activities are normally required of students (at all levels) with the objective of providing them with exposure to research methods in their field of study
 - E.g. interviewing techniques



The Root of the Non Compliance

- Up until recently it was a belief at MRU that “dissemination” is what defines both
 - Research and Risk
- There is just as much (and sometimes more) risk in the data collection, as there is in the dissemination

How we are Non Compliant

- “Research” as defined by TCPS2, that involves humans, must be reviewed by members of a Research Ethics Board
 - These members are appointed by the BOG (via the VP Academic)
 - They are trained and supported, and
 - They are accountable to the HREB Chair and BOG
- Course-Based research with humans, where the intent is purely pedagogical, can be reviewed by Non REB members, However:
 - Oversight must still be provided by the HREB

Human Research Ethics Board Composition at MRU

- Executive:
 - Chair – Cynthia Gallop, Child Studies & Social Work
 - Vice Chair - Cathy Carter-Snell, Nursing & Midwifery
 - Research Compliance Officer; Priscilla Wamucii
- Faculty Delegated Reviewers:
 - Ethicists/Reviewers - 2 (from Philosophy/Gen Ed.)
 - Faculty Reviewers - 7 members (various departments, disciplines, and methods)
 - Student Reviewers - 2 from SAMRU
- Community Representatives:
 - Alberta Health Services
 - Disability services and research
 - Indigenous community representative
- Ad Hoc Advisors
 - U of C Health Ethics Board
 - Legal Advisor
 - IT Advisor
 - Iniskim Centre

Human Research Ethics Board Composition at MRU

- * Currently review and approve all research involving humans at MRU, and/or conducted by faculty at MRU
 - Reviews may be delegated to one or two HREB members, or
 - Full board (when found to be above minimal risk)
- * Currently review student-led research when found to be above minimal risk

Student Human Research Ethics Committee Composition at MRU

➤ Executive:

- Chair – Cathy Carter-Snell, Nursing & Midwifery
- Research Compliance Officer, Priscilla Wamucii

➤ Faculty Committee Reviewers:

- 7 members
- Currently representatives from :
 - Nursing,
 - Social Work,
 - Phys. Ed,
 - Justice studies, and
 - Psychology

Student Human Research Ethics Committee Composition at MRU

- * Currently review and approve most course-based and student-led research involving humans at MRU
 - Reviews are delegated to one or two committee members

Course-Based Research

No expectation to disseminate outside MRU

Current Method	Current Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research conducted for course work does not get ethics approval if it is disseminated in MRU (classroom and/or Research Days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No oversight on the actual data collection process.Poses potential harm to participants, (including MRU student participants) and in particular, vulnerable participants (as defined by TCPS2)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Children/youth, Aboriginal people, inmates, and individuals with cognitive disabilities

Compliance Requirement: Course-Based Research (with no expectation to disseminate outside of MRU) will be reviewed by SHREC for approval to ensure minimal risk or harm to participants

Course-Based Research

No expectation to disseminate outside MRU

- ✓ Can present at MRU Research days or in the classroom

Course-Based Research

Expected to be disseminated outside MRU

Current Method	Current Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One application form is being used by an entire course, which may include one to six sections. The Principal Investigator is the course lead, but may not teach every section of a course. • There is no review of each student's consent form, data collection methods, etc. • Each course approval is currently being granted for up to 3-years, with the only requirement to update the course information if it changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little oversight is possible in the actual data collection process. • Data is being disseminated beyond MRU, sometimes internationally with almost no oversight • Poses potential harm to participants, including MRU student participants, and in particular, vulnerable participants (as defined by TCPS2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children/youth, Aboriginal people, inmates, and individuals with cognitive disabilities

Compliance Requirement: Course-Based Research (Expected to be disseminated outside of MRU) will be sent to HREB for approval to ensure minimal risk or harm to participants. The faculty member sponsor will be the Primary Investigator and each student will be the co-researcher. Will not be submitted as a group/course, but individually

Course-Based Research

Expected to be disseminated outside MRU

- ✓ Can present at MRU Research days, in the classroom, at research conferences, or in journals, etc.

Honours/Student-Led Research

Expected to be disseminated outside MRU

Current Method	Current Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research conducted for Honours Theses or Student-Led projects are going through various, and often inconsistent ethics approval processes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychology<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Internal review process led by department-level committee• Justice Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, and Nursing<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Currently reviewed and approved by SHREC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No oversight on the actual data collection process.• Poses potential harm to participants, including MRU student participants, and in particular, vulnerable participants (as defined by TCPS2)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children/youth, Aboriginal people, inmates, and individuals with cognitive disabilities

Compliance Requirement: Honours/Student-Led Research projects will be sent to HREB for review and approval to ensure minimal risk or harm to participants. The faculty member sponsor will be the Primary Investigator and student will be the co-researcher

Honours/Student-Led Research

Expected to be disseminated outside MRU

✓ Can present at MRU
Research days, in the
classroom, at research
conferences, or in journals,
etc.

New System

Centralized Review System

– Vice Chair of HREB chairs the Student Human Research Ethics Committee (SHREC)

• Currently have faculty from:

1. Nursing (X2)
2. Justice Studies (X2)
3. Sociology (X1)
4. Social Work (X1)
5. Health and Phys. Ed (X1)
6. Psychology (X1)
7. Business (X1)

**Will not include the Psychology Dept.

- They will run their own course-based (not honours) project review committee
- Committee Chair will sit on HREB

* Increase membership to include more faculty reviewers from departments who conduct course-based student projects

- May need to be proportionate to the amount of projects

Impact on MRU

- Significant increase in both HREB and SHREC applications
- More administration and oversight required by:
 - Faculty sponsor/instructor,
 - Chairs, and
 - Deans
- Possible decrease in overall quantity of student-led and course-based applications
- Possible increase in overall quality of applications

Next Steps

- Effectively communicate the expectations around ethics approval requirements
 - HREB's commitment
 - Clearer and better communication on ethics approval requirement and process for student-led and course-based applications
 - Visit Departments and give presentations
 - Visit Faculty Council meetings
 - Currently registered to provide a presentation at the MRFA retreat
 - Department commitment
 - More oversight on courses with undergraduate research components
 - A requirement for each department (with undergraduate research components) to have reviewers on SHREC



Additional Questions

